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For Immediate Release
July 5, 2006

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Securing New York's Ports

Subcommittee to Review Federal, State and Local Information Sharing Efforts

What: Congressional Field Hearing – “Securing Our Ports: Information Sharing Is Key to Effective Maritime Security”
When: Monday, July 10, 2006, 1:00 p.m.
Where: Borough Hall, 209 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, New York

Securing the nation's ports against a potential terrorist attack has become a priority since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Given the fact that ports are large, sprawling enterprises that often stretch across jurisdictional boundaries, the need to share information among federal, state, and local governments is critical.

The United States maritime system consists of more than 300 sea and river ports with more than 3,700 cargo and passenger terminals and more than 1,000 harbor channels spread across thousands of miles of coastline. However, a large portion of maritime cargo is concentrated at a few major ports, including those ports in the New York City metropolitan area. The Port of New York and New Jersey is the nation's third largest and its security is vital to the national interest. The U.S. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection are the principal federal agencies charged with coordinating our port security efforts. These federal entities, working together with state and local entities such as the NYPD and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey provide the overall framework for security of the NY/NJ port system.

This hearing will examine the current state of the federal government's port security efforts with key stakeholders.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

- ❑ Have the Area Maritime Security Committees, created in response to the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002, improved the flow of information among stakeholders?
- ❑ How have the Interagency Operational Centers improved overall information sharing efforts and should this effort be expanded?
- ❑ How has the sensitivity of port security information and the lack of proper security clearances, particularly at the state and local level, impacted information sharing efforts?
- ❑ What has been done to standardize protocols related to information sharing and how have these efforts improved overall security?

- ❑ What other barriers have hindered improvements in information sharing among port security stakeholders?

WITNESSES

- ❑ *Mr. Ray Kelly, Police Commissioner, City of New York*
- ❑ *Captain Robert O'Brien, Commander, Coast Guard Sector New York and Captain, Port of New York and New Jersey*
- ❑ *Ms. Bethann Rooney, Security Manager, Port Commerce Department, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey*
- ❑ *Mr. Stephen Caldwell, Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues, U.S. Government Accountability Office*
